

"THE FAMILY MANAGER"

Property of
Johnnie Speer .

" THE FAMILY MANAGER "

CAST

(THE FAMILY MANAGER)

MR. SAWYER Character
ABNER JONES lead.
LORD ANDREW English fop.
MRS. SAWYER Character
JUDITH Ingenue
IRENE Lead

SETTINGS

FIRST THREE SCENES... Handsome living room interior
of the Sawyer home.
SCENE FOUR The exterior of the farm in New Jersey
Chicken coops and set house L.

PROPS

Bills /
Check book
Two Dress boxes
Jewelry
Telephone
Tables and chairs
Chicken coops and bee hives
Pan of chicken feed
Basket of eggs

"THE FAMILY MANAGER"

Judith

(ENTERS WITH IRENE) Do you really like the gown, Irene?

IRENE

Yes it's charming, sister, but do you know this is the first of the month and I wonder what father's going to say when he finds we've all overdrawn our accounts again. I never saw the way money goes.

JUDITH

Father ought to make our allowance larger. I'm going to suggest it to him.

IRENE

I think you better let mother handle that. She's more authoritative than we are. All she has to do is have one of her tantrums and father gives in.

SAWYER

(ENTERS WITH MRS. SAWYER ARGUING AND CARRYING A PILE OF BILLS) I tell you it has got to stop and when I say stop I mean right now. This extravagance has gone far enough.

MRS. SAWYER

Oh how can you say extravagance. I haven't spent a cent that I haven't needed. To hear you talk you would think that you were a section hand on some railroad instead of the owner of one of the largest rubber plants in the world.

SAWYER

Yes, that's it. You seem to think because I own a rubber plant that you should spend every cent of my income on clothes, foolishness. It's going to stop---that goes for all of you? Do you hear me?(LOOKS AT THEM)

BOTH GIRLS

(MEEKLY) Yes, papa.

SAWYER

I don't suppose it's necessary for me to remind you that you have all overdrawn your allowances. (TO MRS. SAWYER) And you, madam, you've overdrawn the checking account I gave you five hundred and fifty dollars.

MRS. SAWYER

Oh how can they say that. I just know that banks wrong. I couldn't have run out of my money.

SAWYER

How do you know you couldn't?

MRS. SAWYER

Because I still have a whole lot of blank checks left in the book!

SAWYER

(HOLDS HEAD) Oh my God. What's the use? I've a good notion to ~~shut~~ close up this home here in the city and ship you all out to that old farm I own in New Jersey for the summer. You can raise chickens and sell them---~~earn~~ your own money and see how to spend it. Maybe you would learn the practical value of a dollar.

What? Ship us off to a horrid old farm just at the beginning of the social season? Oh, father how could you?

IRENE

Really, dad, isn't that going a little too far?

SAWYER

No, it isn't going too far. I've got to do something drastic. You three women don't know what a dollar is for. It's not altogether your fault, you wo girls, it's your mother here--she hasn't got a brain in her head.

MRS. SAWYER

What don't you dare say that about me. Oh, you brute, accusing me of not bring my children up right. Accusing me of extravagance---why I don't get anything---nothing---not half of what other women get---I've only spent four hundred and fifty dollars this last week---think of it---

SAWYER

Yes think of it--four hundred and fifty dollars and on what? Nothing.

MRS. SAWYER

Why you awful thing. I bought two lovely dresses with it.

IRENE

Yes, and, dad, I've really tried to be saving? Would you believe it? I actually hit a bargain---I bought two dresses for the price of one?

SAWYER

How much did you pay?

IRENE

Only nine hundred dollars!

SAWYER

Oh--and you call that saving. I can see I've got to do something drastic. I think I'll cut you off without a penny send you out to that farm and make you stay there and earn your own living.-

MRS. SAWYER

You'll not do it with me. Look here, you brute you beast, you monster, (FLYING AT HIM) if you think you're going to treat us like that you're mistaken. I'll not stand for it. I'll divorce you and make you pay me enough alimony that you'll have to have two rubber plants to make the monthly installments. I'll take my two daughters, and leave. Yes leave you. You don't deserve them. The idea of you trying to tell us what to do.

JUDITH

Yes, I should say. Mother is right. Father is a beast.

IRENE

Aren't you shamed daddy, talking to us like that?

SAWYER

No I'm not. I'm setting my foot down.

MRS. SAWYER

And when you set your foot down I'm stepping mine out. Oh you've got me all unstrung. I'll have to go to Palm Beach to recuperate---look at

my hands shaking---I'm going to have one of my turns. I know I am. 3

SAWYER

(SLAMS FIST DOWN ON TABLE) Oh rats. (THROWS BOOK IT COMES NEAR HER)

MRS. SAWYER

Oh he struck me. Look, girls, your father's throwing things at me--

JUDITH

Why how could you, daddy.

IRENE

Shame on yourself. Poor mother don't cry.

MRS. SAWYER

Oh I'm going to faint. I know I am. Where's a chair. Where's a chair
(FANTS IN CHAIR)

JUDITH

Oh mother's fainted. Now see what you've done.

IRENE

Oh poor mama. (RUBBING HER HANDS) (CRYING) Look what you've done to our
mama.

JUDITH

Oh! I think I'll faint too. (GRIES)

SAWYER

Oh what's the use? What's the use? Now there's no need in acting this
way---I was only trying to get some common sense out of you.

IRENE

Common sense you've caused mama to faint by your horrid actions.

SAWYER

Oh I'm sorry I'm sorry. Maybe I was to cross, but it gets a man wild
with--with--

IRENE

Now, dad, the only thing you can do is give us a larger account and
buy mama something nice and maybe she will forgive you when she comes
too---

SAWYER

(TAKES OUT CHECK BOOK) Oh anything to have peace in the family. How
much do you want, Judith?

JUDITH

Oh just five hundred. (HE WRITES CHECK)

IRENE

And I'll be real saving. I only want six hundred. (WRITES CHECK)
(FINISHES IT AND WAVES IT UNDER MRS. SAWYER'S NOSE SHE COMES TOO)

MRS. SAWYER

And I'll take eight hundred.

SAWYER

Huh? I might have known this check book would bring you too. (GIVES
THEM CHECKS)

IRENE

Do you feel better now, mother?

Yes a little better. (LOOKING AT CHUCK) I think I'll be well enough to go shopping pretty soon. Come children, let us leave your father to cool off. James, whatever made you act so terribly?

SAWYER

Oh I don't know. I don't know. Maybe it's the heat. The worry. I'm not feeling well.

MRS. SAWYER

Well, what you need is a physic.

SAWYER

Why?

MRS. SAWYER

You've been getting awfully tight lately. (LOOKS AT CHUCK) THEY EXIT

***** NUMBER ONE *****

SAWYER

(ENTERS) (CALLS OFF STAGE) Oh, Marie, show in Mr. Abner Jones, and tell the cook to prepare another plate for dinner.

MRS. SAWYER

(ENTERS) James, did I hear you say we are to have another guest for dinner? May I inquire who it is? You know we are entertaining Lord Algy Whimpoor tonight, and I wouldn't want some coarse vulgarian in on the affair.

SAWYER

Well, my dear, wife, I have invited my general manager, Mr. Abner Jones. He's just gotten back from my rubber plantation in Africa.

MRS. SAWYER

Abner Jones. That's such a common name. I only hope he won't disgrace us in front of Lord Algy. *andrew*

SAWYER

Oh he won't do anything. I dare say he may find it difficult to keep from laughing at the sight of Lord Algy, but outside of that I believe he will be all right. He's used to monkeys after years spent in the African Jungle.

MRS. SAWYER

Beast! (EXITS) (MR. SAWYER LAUGHS)

ABNER JONES

(OFF) Thank you. I see him now. (ENTERS) How do you do, Mr. Sawyer.

SAWYER

How do you do, Jones. Have a cigar? (OFFERS HIM ONE)

ABNER

Thank you. Nice of you to invite me here. in your lovely home. So quiet and peaceful and happy here.

SAWYER

Oh yeah.

ABNER

It takes a homeless lonely fellow like to me to appreciate the way you're belssed, Mr. Sawyer. As I came up the drive I saw this lovely

big house hedged about with honeysuckle and roses, and looking so sweet and peaceful, I just realized all I was missing in life. (LOOK AT WINDOW) And then when I turned the corner and saw your family sitting out on the porch---oh, but it must be wonderful to have a family.

SAWYER

Oh it is. It's just like having the seven year itch. You wait until you have a family of your own.

ABNER

That's what I've always been waiting for and wanting. You're simply not living when you've only got yourself. Can you imagine what it would be like to come home and not find your loved ones waiting for you with outstretched arms?

SAWYER

Outstretched arms? Outstretched hands, you mean. You know a hell of a lot about families don't you? They made a pretty picture to you out there on the porch, didn't they. The smiling faces--I know why they were smiling all right--and the sunshine filtering thru the honeysuckle and the soft colored summer dresses. (SNATCHES UP A BILL, HANDS IT TO ABNER) See that?

ABNER

What is it?

SAWYER

The bill for those soft colored summer dresses! How'd you like to pay that? Have you seen their hats? No, neither have I, but I've seen this. (HANDS HIM ANOTHER BILL) And here's the things they wear underneath. (HANDS LINGERIE BILL) Sometimes on Monday afternoon I go out and sit in the clothes yard to try and get my money's worth on the lingerie bill.

ABNER

If you'll pardon me, Mr. Sawyer, why do you encourage them to be so extravagant? You ought to speak to them.

SAWYER

Speak to them. Oh.

ABNER

I s'pose you're afraid of hurting their feelings--but if you were very careful of the way you expressed it--all you need to do is just drop a hint to them--

SAWYER

And they'd drop a sledge hammer to me. Say, where have you been all of your life?

ABNER

For the most the part I've been in Africa looking after your rubber plantations. That's what I wanted to see you about? Mr. Sawyer, can't you send somebody else the next trip. It's so lonely. I don't believe I could stand it again. You can't realize what it's like never to see a woman.

SAWYER

(BLISSFULLY) Wonderful.

ABNER

There were only three white women there when I first came there, and one of them left and one's dead.

SAWYER

What's the matter with the other one?

ABNER

She was almost killed by our kindness too. The whole club used to paddle six miles up the river on Sunday afternoon just to sit and look at her. She was the only relative any of the boys had.

SAWYER

You had to paddle six miles up the river to see a relative? You're not describing Africa--you're describing heaven. I have always longed for a place like that--to get off in the wilds--I love to picture myself sitting by the camp fire, listening to a cougar howl in the forest, or watching the crocodiles heave about in the river like drifting logs, while a pink cloud of flamingoes floats across the window of blue sky that opens between the palm trees, and you don't like that? You'd rather have a family. Say, Abner, why can't we change places?

ABNER

(STARTLED) Change places--how do you mean?

SAWYER

I mean I will go to Africa if you will take over my family. You're longing for a family and I'm longing for a rest.

ABNER

You mean that you'd actually leave me in charge of your family?

SAWYER

I mean I'll install you here as Father. They don't think much of me as a father--so I should like to let them try a new one.

ABNER

If you'll pardon me, Mr. Sawyer, I think that is one of the wildest ideas I ever heard of.

SAWYER

Not at all. It would be a liberal education for you--and believe me you need it. It's really awful to think of a poor innocent fellow going about with the idea that if you want to stop women from being extravagant, all you need to do is drop a hint. You long for the touch of a woman's hand do you? Well, I'll give you my family and you'll get touched and how! You've done a lot for me, Abner. Your honesty and faithfulness have helped me to make a large fortune--so I'd like to do something for you. I want to open your eyes before you've landed yourself with a wife, a mother-in-law and a couple of kids.

ABNER

But what would the family say to the scheme?

SAWYER

We don't need to care what they say. I've still got one hold over my family. They all sit up on their hind legs and woof when I hold this little book. (HOLDS CHECK BOOK LIKE IT WAS SUGAR FOR A POODLE DOG)

ABNER

(SHOCKED) You rule them with a check book? That isn't right, Mr. Sawyer.

SAWYER

If you can discover any other way to rule them I shall be most grateful. It's all settled. I'm going to Africa and you're taking over my family. I'll call them in. Girls. Mother. Come in here.

(THEY ENTER) My dear family, I wish to announce that there is to be a great change in our daily life. I am going to Africa and Mr. Jones here is going to take over my family. He shall be your father for the time being. His word is law. The girls are to be given their regular allowances, and there will be a certain sum set aside for the maintenance of the home. But all charge accounts are to be cut off, and if Jones doesn't approve of your purchases all your C. O. D.'s will be so. Oh. S's.

MRS. SAWYER

What why the very idea.

JUDITH

That's terrible. (THEY ALL SNUB HIM)

ABNER

Really now, Mr. Sawyer, if they don't want me--and it is only natural that they shouldn't.

SAWYER

Of course they don't want you. They'd like a chance to do all the silly, extravagant, idiotic things that they can't do while I'm here.

MRS. SAWYER

But, don't you realize, Mr. Jones is a stranger. He doesn't know us.

SAWYER

No, and it's a damn good thing he doesn't.. Mr. Jones has been longing for a family life. He thinks it is beautiful. He doesn't like Africa because it is lonely and all his time is spent among wild cannibals, lions and tigers---Mr. Jones, you don't know ~~xxx~~ it but you're in the midst of the wildest collection of animals you ever saw. Permit me my wife, a female lioness, my two daughters a couple of bull pups, and they've all got boy friends who are perfect jackasses. Now you are the trainer---try and tame 'em.

JUDITH

Well, he won't tame me.

SAWYER

See my boy---that's home life. Look at 'em. Sweet---gentle---smiling happy---(LAUGHS SARCASTICALLY)

MRS. SAWYER

James Sawyer, I think you've gone crazy.

IRENE

Oh now, mother, I don't think it's such a bad idea. Dad does deserve a vacation. We have led him an awful life. And I--I'm (SMILES AT ABNER) I'm sure Mr. Jones will make a splendid father.

ABNER

Thank you. Really, Miss Sawyer, if you feel that way about it I feel inclined to accept. Of course, I appreciate it's rather a wild idea, but after all you will want someone to lean on.

SAWYER

Lean on? They won't want to lean on you; they'll sit on you! Oh boy I can hardly wait until I catch that boat for Africa.

ABNER

You'll be sick of it soon enough, Mr. Sawyer. You don't realize it, but you're going to be terribly lonely.

8

SAWYER
Don't realize it, don't I? Why that's the whole reason I'm going. All my life I've been longing for it. Lonely! I'm going to try to be so blame lonely that may e I'll be able to understand why a man is darn fool enough to raise a family!

MRS. SAWYER
Well, I won't stand for a stranger telling me what to do.

JUDITH
Nor I either.

IRENE
Oh come now. We're hardly treating him fair. I'm sure Mr. Jones must feel as uncomfortable as we do.

ABNER
Don't--(EMBARRASSED) Don't call me Mr. Jones. Call me---Abner.

IRENE
Oh no. I'm going to call you father.

SAWYER
(LAUGHS) Well, so long, my happy family---may you're new father do well--

MRS. SAWYER
Oh I'm going to faint. (FAINTS)

ABNER
She's fainted. Oh, Mr. Sawyer---what shall I do?

SAWYER
Don't ask me. That's your problem now. (LAUGHS AND EXITS)

(CLOSE IN)
**** NUMBER TWO ****

IRENE
(ENTERS WITH TELEGRAM) Oh Mother I just recieved a telegram from Daddy. He's ten days out a sea---in another week they'll reach the rubber plantation.

MRS. SAWYER
Yes, just think ten days we've been left in the hands of that unspeakable Mr. Jones, telling us what to do and how to spend our money--oh!

IRENE
Oh really mother we shouldn't treat him like we do. It was all father's idea and he is only obeying orders. (LAUGHS) The poor fellow actually seems embarrassed to death in our presence.

ABNER
(ENTERS) Good evening, Miss Sawyer. *(Mrs. Sawyer gives him dirty look and exits)*

IRENE
Miss Sawyer? That's rather a formal way of addressing your daughter.

ABNER
Don't you think we've had about enough of that father and daughter joke?

IRENE

Don't you want me to think of you as a father?

ABNER

No---because--If you think of me as a ftehr you'll begin thinking of me as old--not old in years perhaps, but stoggy and serious.

IRENE

But I don't. You're just the thing I've been asking for.

ABNER

(EAGERLY) Am I really?

IRENE

Yes --a young father--one who's not too old to understand my problem.

ABNER

Oh--I suppose, Miss Sawyer, you want to ask my advice about something?

IRENE

Yes, it's about Andy. You know Lord Andrew. He wants to marry me, and my own father took a rather dislike to him. I like Andy in lots of ways--and then you know a girl should marry some time.

ABNER

But must you marry Lord Andrew?

IRENE

(LAUGHS) You don't like Lord Andrew ~~that~~ either, do you?

ABNER

Well, he's all right in a way--but he doesn't wiegh much. Aren't there any nice American boys---

IRENE

Oh lots of boys---and men--but mother says Lord Andrew would add social prestige to our name and then I don't think it can be very nice to marry any one who is not higher than you or at least one who's tastes are on a different pane from your own.

ABNER

Oh you wouldn't marry a man who--(PAUSE)--I understand. But do you love, Andy?

IRENE

I don't know. I like Andy for certain things and I like the other boys for other things. If I could marry them all I'd be happy maybe

ABNER

If I was to ever get married. I'd only want one woman--and I wouldn't have any other. I'd want her all the time--everywhere I go--And most of all I'd want her to come home to--for after all it's the thought that the woman you love is waiting for you there that makes "home" the most beautiful word in all the languages of the world.

IRENE

(SMILING) Why, Father, I had no idea you were so romantic. Have you met the only girl in the world yet?

ABNER

Yes only recently---but maybe I'm not on just the same level with her.

10

ANDY
[OFF STAGE] Oh I shall find her. Oh I say, Irene---old deah, where are you? (ENTERS) By Jove, here you are. (TAKES HER IN HIS ARMS)

IRENE
Oh, Andy, I'm so glad to see you. I've just been talking about you to my father--

ANDY
Oh really I hope you've told him something nice about me.

ABNER
Don't worry. She has.

ANDY
Haw that's ripping don't you know? I say it's jolly here with your new father---he's so much nicer than the old one. I say your real father never seemed to smile upon me at all. It was bally disgusting.

JUDITH
(ENTERS WITH HER MOTHER THEY ARE CARRYING BOXES) I'll bring them right in. Oh here's Mr. Jones, Mother. Mr. Jones, here is two C. O. D.'s we want some money. Oh hello, Lord Andrew.

ANDY
How do you do, old deah. I say what is this American meaning. C. O. D. what does it mean?

IRENE
Oh that manes call on Dad. You go down to the store buy something and have it sent to the house--the head of the family pays for it.

ANDY
Haw, I say that's a jolly idea.

ABNER
I'm very sorry, Miss Soawyer, but you have overdrawn your accounts for this month--

MRS. SAWYER
Well, then we can draw on next months. That's the way we always done when my husband was at home.

ABNER
I'm very sorry, but that was his way. He left me only so much money and I'm afraid your C. O. D.'s will have to go back to the store.

MRS. SAWYER
What you propse thatkake we should send these lovely gowns back? How dare you. I won't stand for it. What do you think I am going to wear to dinner tonight?

ABNER
Really, madam, that is a very charming dress you have on.

MRS. SAWYER
A tea gown at dinner.

JUDITH
That shows how stupid he is.

IRENE
Oh don't be a chump, Judith. You know you've got a closet full of dinner gowns.

JUDITH 11
That's no reason why I should be treated like a school girl and humiliated by having my purchases sent back.

ABNER
If you feel that way about it, Miss Sawyer, I'll pay it out of my own account.

(TAKES OUT CHECK BOOK)

MRS. SAWYER
No indeed. We do not want to be under any obligations to you. Come, daughter, I think we can raise enough on our pearls and jewelry until your father gets back--

ABNER
Oh please don't do that, Mrs. Sawyer. If we can just get together and see if we can save--

MRS. SAWYER
Save! You talk as if the Sawyer Rubber Company were on the verge of ruin.

ANDRY
Good Lord it isn't is it? (GREATLY ALARMED)

ABNER
No. Why are you so alarmed. Won't you ladies please try to--

MRS. SAWYER
We'll do nothing of the kind. I'm pawning my jewelry at once. (EXITS)

ABNER
I'm awfully sorry to have to hurt their feelings like this.

IRENE
Before you put that check book back, I may as well make my application.
I

ABNER
Certainly how much do you need?

IRENE
I think a hundred and fifty will do. We're going to teach Andy to play Red Dog after dinner.

ABNER
Red Dog? Is that gambling?

IRENE
Yes. Why? Do you object to my gambling?

ABNER
I have no reason to object to your gambling as long as your father doesn't mind.

IRENE
Oh I can't say father doesn't mind. He kicks up an awful fuss whenever he hears about my losses. Now isn't that just like a man who gambles with millions in the rubber market to object to his children playing cards for money? One hundred and fifty please. (HOLDS OUT HAND)

ABNER
(MISERABLY) I'm dreadfully sorry. Y

IRENE

ABNER

Your father left me in charge and I promised him I'd try and look after his home and family just as he would himself.

IRENE

So because I tell you he objects to my gambling you won't give me any money.

ABNER

I'll give it to you if you'll promise you won't use it for that purpose

IRENE

Well, if Judith felt like a schoolgirl, I felt like an infant.

ABNER

You insist on calling me father, please don't be annoyed the first time I act like one.

IRENE

No, I can appreciate a joke--even though it's on myself -but when you ask me of promises of good behavior it is too idiotic to be even funny. However praises be--I also have a pearl necklace. So your lesson in Red Dog is postponed merely until tomorrow, Andy. Come. we will go out on the terrace and you can tell me nice things. (THEY EXIT)

ABNER

Irene--wait---oh what a mess I've made of things. (TELEPHONE RINGS) Hello. Yes this is Mr. Jones speaking, Mr. Sawyer's business manager. What? A flurry in the stock market. Mr. Sawyer's stocks have dropped. Not seriously. Oh that's a relief. I see then it is just a temporary depression. Very well. I'll be right down to the office. (HANGS UP) By Jove a slight drop in the Sawyer Rubber Company. That's an idea. I'll try it.

MRS. SAWYER

(ENTERS WITH JUDITH. BOTH ARE CARRYING NECKLACES AND JEWELRY) Come, Judith, we will go the jewelry store at once.

ABNER

Mrs. Sawyer, where are you going with those jewels.

MRS. SAWYER

We are taking them to pawn like I said I would.

ABNER

I will have to forbid you to do that. Mr. Sawyer would not permit you too if he were here and since I am father in his place--those jewels will not be pawned for foolishness.

MRS. SAWYER

How dare you tell me what to do with my jewelry. Out of my way.

ABNER

(IN FRONT OF HER) I said you'll not take those jewels out.

MRS. SAWYER

You let me go or I'll scream for help. (SCREAMS)

IRENE

(ENTERS WITH ANDY) What's the matter, mother?

ABNER

There is nothing the matter, except I have some very sad news to tell you all. Your father's business is ruined. He's broke--

ALL

Broke?

ABNER

Busted! The shortage in the company has to be covered if it takes every last dollar.

MRS. SAWYER

Last dollar. Does--does that mean that everything is gone? His private fortune?

ABNER

I'm afraid there is no private fortune; it is all in business. Perhaps we can save the home. I'm going to try. But it can't be kept up. We've got to rent it.

MRS. SAWYER

Rent it. Then where in the world will we live?

ABNER

That's a problem we have got to face.

MRS. SAWYER

Well, there's only one thing we can do; we'll just have to wait until my husband gets back from Africa.

ABNER

You actually propose to sit down and fold your hands until Mr. Sawyer gets back to earn your living for you?

JUDITH

Well, what can we do? . We've never worked in our lives.

ABNER

You'll have to do like other people, Miss Sawyer, and find out how. Mr. Sawyer is over fifty years old. All his life he has worked for his family--for you. He has supported you--made a beautiful home for you--a home that none of you appreciate because you've never had to do without it. He's given you everything. And now, after years of office drudgery, of fighting and struggling for you, are you going to ask him to start in all over again--at his age--with a family hanging around his neck?

IRENE

Of course we're not, Mr. Jones. Though I don't blame you for thinking us quite capable of it. I'm going to get a job and at once.

ANDY

Oh deah. I say, Irene, are you really going to do some form of manual labor. I say that's beastly. Really, Mr. Jones, are you quite sure that they broke---absolutely penniless?

ABNER

I do. *am*

ANDY

Oh I say. Isn't that dreadful? Really, you know old deahs, I think I must toddle along. See you some time, Irene. Toddle oo---too bad

IRENE

Andy!

ABNER

Well, there's one thing nice about all of this, Irene, you won't be bothered with fortune hunters.

IRENE

So that was all he was after---just my money. Oh I feel like a kitten just getting my eyes open. (GETS NEWSPAPER)

MRS. SAWYER

Irene, what are you doing?

IRENE

I'm looking in the want ads for a job. Let's see they want a girl to work in a candy factory--making kisses---I ought to be good at kisses. Judith, I'll find you a job too.

JUDITH

Oh I don't want to work.

MRS. SAWYER

What would all my friends say if they say me behind the counter of some store. Oh. (SHUDDERS)

IRENE

Well, I think I'd rather have something to eat and a few clothes than to have friends who only thought of me for my money. Mother, here's a good job for you. (READS) Wanted woman; to work in the Eagle Laundry.

MRS. SAWYER

Why how could I take that? I don't know a thing about washing eagles. Oh, dear, what are we to ever do?

ABNER

Folks, I have a happy idea. Mr. Sawyer, owns a farm in New Jersey, why not go down there, and raise chickens and bees and sell the honey and eggs---we could live quite comfortably I dare say.

IRENE

Oh that's splendid. I forgot about the old farm. We could fix it up and I'd gather in the eggs every morning. Mother and Judith, could gather in the honey---

MRS. SAWYER

It's absurd. I don't want to live on a horrid old farm.

IRENE

But, mother, we have got to do something--or starve. (ANDY ENTERS)
Lord Andrew, what are you doing here?

ANDY

I say look here, it strikes me I done a beastly mean thing leaving just at a time when you have all met with misfortune. I say what are you going to do now?

IRENE

We are going to live on my father's farm and raise chickens.

Well, now if you folks will permit me, I'd like to go with you. I have a little confesh to make. I came over here to America with the idea of marrying money. That's true--absolutely. But when I left here just a moment ago I just discovered money hasn't a dashed thing to do with the way I feel about you--so if good old Mr. Jones will help me I'm going to be naturalized and settle down in America and--and get a job.

ABNER AND IRENE

A job?

ANDY

Yes, I'm not too good to work---even if I do have a title.

IRENE

Andy, you're a dear!

ABNER

Well, put her there, old man. I thought I had you picked for a no good fortune hunter, but you're a real man after all. I'll never say a word against the English as long as I live.

ANDY

Thank you.

IRENE

But one minute, Andy---your family--surely they are counting on you?

ANDY

To bring home an heiress? Yes, I suppose they are. But I've been a sore disappointment to my family from the very first. Will you believe it, they had it all planned out before I was born to christen me Victoria and marry me to a Duke. When do we start for the farm?

ABNER

Right away.

MRS. SAWYER

Well, I'm not going. I still have some jewelry and personal belongings I shall sell them and live in my accustomed wealth as long as I can--when they are gone--nothing else matters--

JUDITH

And I too---I'll sell my jewels--and when they are gone I'll sell myself to some man--I'd rather do that than live on a farm--

ABNER

Ladies, you don't know what you are saying. I can't permit you to do either.

JUDITH

You'll not stop me.

ABNER

Oh yes I will. I was made your father--and if either one of you try to get away from here and sell your jewelry, I'll do just what your father would do if he were here--

MRS. SAWYER

What's that?

ABNER

Give you a job.

JUDITH

Well, you'll not spank me and I'm going to sell my jawles now--

ABNER

Oh are you? (GRABS HER TURNS HER OVER HIS KNEE AND SPANKS HER) You've needed this for a long time, and I've been wanting to give it to you ever since the first day I met you. (FINISHES WITH HER. SHE YELLS. THEN GRABS AT MRS. SAWYER) And you're next-- (SHE SCREAMS. HE CATCHES HER AND IS SPANKING HER AS CURTAIN FALLS)

**** NUMBER THREE ****

(EXTERIOR OF THE OLD NEW JERSEY FARM)

IRENE

(ENTERS IN APRON AND CARRYING CHICKEN FEED PAN) Here, chicky, here chicky. (THROWS FEED OFF STAGE)

ABNER

(ENTERS) Well, how's the little mistress of the greatest chicken and egg farm in the state of New Jersey.

IRENE

Fine and dandy. I love farm life more every day. Oh, Abner, we can never thank you for the what you have done for us. Even though mother does not want to admit she is actually happy here.

ABNER

I'm glad of it. All of you have come through splendidly. Your father will be mighty proud when he hears of it. Just think in the last three months--we have made a living for all of us and saved practically three thousand dollars.

IRENE

I can't get over how Andy has taken to this life. It was splendid of him.

ABNER

Yes, what he done has made you admire him more than ever before. Do you---you really love him now?

IRENE

Well, we are engaged.

ABNER

Yes that's so---(TURNS AWAY)

IRENE

Why, father, surely you're not sorry, are you? Don't you think Andy is a fine man?

ABNER

Yes---I hope you will be happy. I--

IRENE

After all I had to become engaged to Andy. He is the only man that has had nerve enough to tell me he loved me. Do you know I sometimes believe there are men in the world so stupid that if they loved a woman they wouldn't tell her.

ABNER

Eh?

Abner, what would you do if you ~~had a girl~~ and were a girl and you thought maybe a man loved you---but didn't know--and he wouldn't say anything and---oh what would do you if you were a girl?

ABNER

I don't know I've never been one before.

IRENE

Oh! (TURNS AWAY FROM HIM) I think all men are stupid. I suppose some men would like to have the girl propose to them.

ANDY

(ENTERS WITH BASKET) Oh I say, I've been gathering the eggs, by jove I do believe some of the hens have gone on a strike. They've only laid one egg a day a piece. Do you know I've been working on an invention to make hens lay more than one egg? Really it's quite a remarkable idea---coming from me. You see I've built a little box with a trap door in it--the hen sets on that and lays an egg--the egg falls through the trap door and disappears, then when the hen gets up to view her piece of work, she discovers she hasn't laid an egg so she sets down and lays another one---

ABNER

(LAUGHING) That's a great idea all right.

JUDITH

(ENTERS HOLDING HER BACK AND YELLING) Oh oh I've been stung by a bee. I've been stung by a bee. Get some arnica quick.

ABNER

Where did the bee sting you?

JUDITH

Between the wood shed and the kitchen. (EXITS IN HOUSE L.)

IRENE

(LAUGHS) Poor Judith has a terrible time with her bees. But she loves it just like we all do. I never knew earning your own money could be so much fun.

ABNER

Do you really think your mother likes it?

IRENE

Of course she does, only she doesn't want to admit it. Why she just fusses and fumes and takes care of those chickens all day. Right now she's out in the chicken coop taking care of a poor old hen that's been ill lately. But if you'd ask her, she'd deny it. Here she comes now--

MRS. SAWYER

(ENTERS APRON GLOVES AND HAT) Oh my this hot sun.

IRENE

Mother, you shouldn't worry so much over that poor old hen.

MRS. SAWYER

Who's worrying over it? I haven't been near the chicken pen. I wouldn't go near those horrid old chickens, I--

IRENE

Mother---now now---if you haven't been out in the chicken coop what is

that on your nose? (POINTS TO HER NOSE SHE HAS A BLACK DOT WITH A LITTLE WHITE SPEC IN THE MIDDLE OF IT)

MRS. SAWYER

(WIPE) Oh ~~kkk~~ some of those chickens haven't the least bit sense of direction. (THEY ALL LAUGH) Well, I was out in the chicken coop I had to take care of that old hen. She was sick. Andy made her sick with his crazy ideas of raising poultry--do you know what he's been trying to do lately? I caught him pouring ~~water~~ hot water down a hen's throat to make her lay a hard boiled egg. (THEY ALL LAUGH)

ANDY

That's nothing. She was trying the same thing on a rooster!

ABNER

Well, I've got to go get some paint to paint the chicken coops. By the way, folks, I think your real father will be home soon. I recieved word the other day. (EXITS)

MRS. SAWYER

Oh my goodness I wonder what James will think of us all?

IRENE

(LOOKS OFF R.) Look. There's a car coming up the drive. It's father. (THEY ALL RUSH TO R.)(JUDITH ENTERS) Poor daddy, I wonder if he knows that his business is ruined? We must break it to him easy. (SAWYER ENTERS) Dad.

SAWYER

Well, well, look at this--why you're all in aprons. You look like you've been working.

MRS. SAWYER

I should say we have. We've done quite nicely.

IRENE

Yes, and daddy, if you need any help in staring over in business we can help you out we've saved a little change.

SAWYER

Good heavens! You're all talking as if I'd gone broke.

MRS. SAWYER

Well, you don't know it maybe, but you're a ruined man. Didn't you hear about your failure when you got to Africa--it happened just ten days after you left.

SAWYER

What? You mean to say something happened to the business that I haven't been told about?

IRENE

Yes, Abner, almost cried when he broke the news to us.

SAWYER

Oh I see what has happened. They made a mess of things down at the office---Abner and that fellow Russell. I was a fool to go away and leave ~~that~~ a tricky business to a couple of underlings. And to think they never told me. What in the world was the matter with Abner---could he have--oh he wouldn't have ruined me on purpose--

Of course he wouldn't. You owe him a lot for all that he has done to us. Abner saved us. He has shown us self respect and taught us more than all of your money ever could. (ABNER ENTERS)

SAWYER

See here, Abner, my family have just been telling me that the Sawyer rubber Company has gone to the devil?

ABNER

(SMILING) Oh yes bad vusinesss isn't it? But on the other hand the Bee and Chicken industyr is thriving.

SAWYER

Tell me straight how did it happen. You must have been gambling with futures.

ABNER

Yes sir I was, only it wasn't rubber futures I was gambling with--but human futruess--the futures of all these people here.

SAWYER

Yes, if you have ruined me--you have ruined them.

ABNER

Ruined them? Good heavens, look at them! Are they ruined? Look at Judith--sun burned---happy---and the best bee trainer in the country Look at Irene---the best chicken raiser in New Jersey--and your wife--and your future son-in-law, Andy--all of them. Just look at your daughters--our daughters--aren't you proud of them? As a business man and captain of industry you're a marvel, but as a father you're simply not in it with me.

SAWYER

(REALIZING TRUTH) Do you mean to say--

ABNER

Yes, the story of the ruin was a fake. You are still rich and can support them all as a crowd of spongers if they will let you again, but I miss my guess if they do.

MRS. SAWYER

Oh then he cooked up all this story just to make us work.

IRENE

Wasn't it a cute idea.

SAWYER

Well, I'll be damned. I can see why you did it, but I'm darned if I can see how you did it. Do you mean to tell me you actually made my old woman work-- kkkk, Ma, you been holding out on me.

MRS. SAWYER

Oh I've learned a few things--(SMELLS) Oh my meats buring---come on in the house dinner will be ready soon--James, I've learned how to cook since you've been gone--(KIKSK

SAWYER

I think I'm still dreaming---

IRENE

No, it's all the truth, daddy. Mr. Jones has been a wonderful father

and he taught us all how to work---and you said that all we'd do do was touch him for money, but, daddy, he's touched all of us---in our hearts right here.

MRS. SAWYER

(HOLDS SEAT) Yes and he touched me somewhere else. (KITS) (JUDITH EXITS) (SO DOES SAWYER)

ANDY

Yes, we all ~~have~~ are grateful to Mr. Jones--and by the way, Irene, I have another confess to make. I've just discovered that you and I are not going to get married.

IRENE

Why, Andy! Don't you love me, is that what you mean?

ANDY

No I mean that you love Abner, I've been watching you both of late, and I've noticed a few things.

IRENE

You noticed? Oh, no. Andy, you dear old silly---you couldn't notice anything of that sort. Not any more than Abner could.

ABNER

Eh? How's that?

ANDY

It---it's true enough---isn't it? (IRENE NODS HER HEAD "YES") Then that settled ---it's been dueced well worth while knowing you and being one of the family.

IRENE

You'll always be that, Andy, dear.

ANDY

Congrats, Abner, old boy, an'--an' all that sort of thing. (TURNS AT DOOR WAY) I say that chicken smells good that your mother is cooking. (GOES IN WHISTLING WITH AN ATTEMPT AT JAUNTINESS)

IRENE

(PAUSE. LOOKING AFTER HIM) Isn't he a dear?

ADAM

Irene. (HE BREAKS OFF)

IRENE

Yes, Abner?

ABNER

I don't know what to say--it--it doesn't seem possible.

IRENE

Maybe you don't love me. Do you? Or don't you?

ABNER

Oh, Irene, there aren't any words to tell you. (HE NOW FINDS COURAGE TO HOLD HER IN HIS ARMS AND IS ABOUT TO KISS HER)

IRENE

Father?

A

ABNER

(THINKING SHE MEANS MR. SAWYER JUMPS BACK) Where?

IRMA

No, dear--not daddy. (TAKES HIS HANDS HELPING HIM OUT) It's you that I'm calling that--don't you like the name?

ABNER

Oh, gee, I forgot.

IRMA

Then I'll tell you something--I think maybe--after we're married we'll be like good old fashioned country folk--and I'll always call you "Dather". (SHE SAYS IT SLOWLY. HE HOLDS HER CLOSER AND KISSES HER--- ONE LONG KISS)

SAWYER

(AT WINDOW WITH CHICKEN BONE IN HIS HAND) Say if you don't hurry, the there'll be nothing left for you but the neck--I say the neck---(SEES THEM) Oh I see you've got plenty of neck right now. (THEY BREAK AWAY AND LAUGH)

F I N A L E.